

17 ICT, POWER, AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISCOURSE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Mark Thompson
Judge Institute of Management
University of Cambridge
Cambridge
United Kingdom

Abstract

This paper uses critical discourse analysis to demonstrate how information and communications technology (ICT) has become deeply involved in the conception and practice of socio-economic development within so-called less-developed countries (LDCs). A recent speech on ICT by the president of the World Bank Group is examined, showing the role of the discourse surrounding such technologies in replicating and extending a markedly North American worldview into the developmental sphere. The ability of critical discourse analysis to expose the involvement of ICT in normalizing a dominant set of political and economic assumptions confirms its usefulness as a tool with which to approach the critical study of information systems.

1 INTRODUCTION: DEVELOPMENT AND ICT AS CONTESTED DOMAINS

This paper has two aims: to draw attention to the dual role of information and communications technology (ICT) as both the medium and the subject of discursive power relations, and to demonstrate the usefulness to information systems (IS) researchers of an adapted form of critical discourse analysis in identifying and exposing this relationship in their own fields of study. In seeking to achieve these aims, a highly problematic discursive domain has been

chosen for discussion: the field of *development*, which, with its almost unique ability to define others, identify their problems, and to legitimize professional intervention in their daily lives, has proved a particularly rewarding subject in the 1990s for critical analysis. The paper is organized simply. The introduction provides a brief summary of why development should, perhaps, be surrounded by quotation marks, together with a short account of the increasing role played by ICT in mediating developmental discourse. The main section then explains critical discourse analysis, shows how it has been adapted here to provide an arguably powerful framework for a critical paper, and then demonstrates this method, through detailed analysis of parts of a recent speech on the subject of ICT by a key proponent of development: the president of the World Bank. Finally, the conclusion provides some reflections on the likely usefulness of such an approach for those seeking to problematize the discursive role of ICT within other domains.

1.2 The Discourse of Development

Following Foucault, who defined discourse as “the interplay of the rules that make possible the appearance of objects during a given period of time” (1972, p. 33), various recent critical writers on development have used the theoretical relationship between power and knowledge addressed by discourse analysis to attain “a radical reading of subjectivity in the sense that through discourses individuals become subjects” (Mohan 1997; see also Said 1978). In questioning the legitimacy of the developmental professional *gaze* (Sachs 1992) to define and thus subjectify recipients of aid, critics of development have highlighted instead the importance of situated, local knowledge as opposed to the representational knowledge of professionals (Chambers et al. 1989; Hobart 1993; Long and Long 1992; Pottier 1993), but stressed that, all too often, it is the latter which, as legitimate discourse, comes to shape developmental interventions (Gardner and Lewis 1996).

Perhaps the most influential contribution to the post-structuralist critique of development has been that of Escobar (1995), whose Foucauldian *Encountering Development* is an often angry description of the way in which the problematization of poverty and development have coevolved within development discourse. In a clear demonstration of the way in which discourse creates and sustains relations of power, Escobar describes the “discovery” of poverty by the West in the post-war period; the transformation of the poor into the assisted; the associative linking of philanthropy with morality, and poverty with degeneracy; the invention of development as a response to this object; the explicit (latterly implicit) assumption of linear evolution along a Western

trajectory; the theorization of technology as a sort of moral force, and the growth, professionalization and institutionalization of expertise about the Third World. In Escobar's view:

Development was...the result of the establishment of a set of relations among these elements, institutions, and practices and of the systematization of these relations to form a whole (1995, p. 40).

As a result,

The forms of power that have appeared act not so much by repression but by normalization...the construction of the poor and undeveloped as universal, preconstituted subjects, based on the privilege of the representers (1995, p. 53).

As a set of relations which objectifies and structures marginality and thus arguably reproduces networks of power, development is thus a particularly fitting subject for discourse analysis (Dahl and Hjort 1984).

1.2 ICT as Mediator and Subject of Developmental Discourse

There is, moreover, a compelling case for examining the growing part played by ICT in shaping how the discourse of development achieves such a structuring of marginality. This increasingly important involvement occurs on two levels. The first level involves the role of ICT as mediator of developmental discourse; this forms the subject of the remainder of this introductory section. Having gained an awareness of ICT's role as mediator, it is hoped that the reader will then be in a position to appreciate the implications of ICT's second level of involvement in development, which forms the focus of the critical discourse analysis in this paper: as a form of developmental discourse itself.

ICT works to mediate developmental discourse at both macro- and micro-levels. At the macro-level, ICT is structurally integrating communities into wider, uneven networks of power. Although usually remaining on the periphery of flows of knowledge and wealth, less-developed countries (LDCs) are nonetheless integrated involuntarily within global networks of capital, production, trade, and communication, increasingly mediated by ICT (Castells 1997, 1998). This recognition has resulted in the inclusion of such technologies as important elements of developmental strategies and interventions (e.g. Gillespie and

Cornford 1997; UNCTAD 1997; UNESCO 1996), and unprecedented levels of investment in ICT by major developmental donors, often at the expense of alternative forms of initiative (Jensen [2001] provides a useful summary of some recent investment figures). The discourse surrounding the appropriate use of ICT in LDCs is thus becoming part of developmental discourse itself, as macro-level developmental policy options are becoming increasingly linked to the shape of technological evolution (Perez 1988).

At the micro-level, the power relations surrounding the development and use of ICT in developmental contexts are more ubiquitous. In the words of Bloomfield and Coombs (1992):

information system embodies a particular *view* or *model* of the world...thus in contrast to the earlier views of computers and power, we must shift our focus...to consider the *meaning* of information systems, the *visibilities*...whose creation and mobilization they make possible within organizations...and thus their role in classifying, ordering, and constructing reality (1992, p. 467, emphasis in original).

Rather than being inherently top-down in nature, the operation of power within ICTs in the above sense lies in their mediation of the contested domain of what becomes visible and real. Within the developmental environment, this entails an especial danger, since

The computer evolved overwhelmingly in the West in a manner compatible with Western mentality, cultural and political values. When IT is injected into cultures such as those of North Africa, it comes loaded with an embedded virtual value system (Danowitz et al. 1995, p. 28).

Although in any emergent worldview, “technology is the machine’s relationship with its users” (Grint and Woolgar 1997, p. 92), and thus there can be nothing essentialist about the nature of this relationship (see, for example, the variety of examples of such relationships established within LDC contexts in Avgerou and Walsham 2000), there is nonetheless a danger that in its role in mediating what, and how, aspects of development become visible, the *frozen discourse* of ICT may assist in replicating a wider discourse of marginalization unless there is real sensitivity to the ICT-user relationship within LDC contexts (Avgerou 2000; Bhatnagar 2000; Smithson and Land 1986). Perhaps the most controversial current example of the ability of ICT to mediate developmental discourse is the World Bank’s Global Development Gateway (www.gdgateway.org).

developmentgateway.org) launched in 2001. As a high-budget (\$7 million), high-profile project with further substantial funds already earmarked (Aslam 2001), the Gateway Foundation appears to be independent (as exemplified by its independent website address), yet is in fact funded and controlled by the Bank itself. The Gateway has been extensively criticized (Wilks 2001) for its attempts to normalize the entire developmental field according to the discursive categories of the Bank, its donors, and contractors.

The result has been a policy of non-cooperation with the Gateway by a growing number of developmental stakeholders. As an example, the South African Non-governmental Organization Network, Congress of South African Trade Unions, and South African Non-Governmental Coalition issued a statement in 2001 that they “firmly and unequivocally” declined to participate, claiming:

While the Development Gateway purports to promote local community organizations and their information *initiatives*, its true intention is to control the development information discourse to promote its own particular perspectives” (Aslam 2001).

Such critics argue that the World Bank’s attempt to harness ICT to present one, neutralized, reality of development is crowding out, unfairly competing with, and thus defunding the alternative realities of others, who reject their objectified, or alternative status vis-à-vis the mainstream (Said 1978); in any event, the Gateway is a powerful example of the increasingly perceived importance of ICT in mediating developmental power relations. In seeking to demonstrate how the discourse leading to such initiatives is legitimized and replicated in practice, the approach chosen has thus been a critical analysis of sections of a recent speech on ICT and development given by the Bank’s president.

2 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF A SPEECH ON ICT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD BANK

In the previous section, it was explained how ICT acts at both macro- and micro-levels to mediate relations of power in developmental discourse. As befits a critical standpoint, therefore, the structural motivations of the author regarding the proposed discourse analysis have first been explained to the reader. It is hoped as a result that the examples below of the replication of such discourse in practice at the micro-level, where ICT becomes a strand of developmental discourse itself, will emerge clearly to the reader.

2.1 Methodology

The methodology adapted for the purposes of this paper is Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, or CDA (Fairclough 1995a, 1995b, 1999), which locates social structures within a dialectical relationship with social activities. Politically, therefore (addressing the *critical* part of the method), "connections between the use of language and the exercise of power are often not clear to people, yet appear on closer examination to be vitally important to the workings of power" (Fairclough 1995b, p. 54), while methodologically (addressing the *discourse analysis* part of the method), "texts constitute a major source of evidence for grounding claims about social structures, relations, and processes" (Fairclough 1995a, p. 209). In fusing power with semiotic activity (a wider category than straight linguistics), CDA views texts as examples of wider discourses, thus blending the approaches to discourse of social theorists such as Foucault (1972) with linguists such as van Dijk (1985). In doing so, CDA differs from purely linguistic approaches to discourse analysis which might, for example, focus in the first instance on constructions such as phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics (van Dijk 1988).

As might be expected of a critical approach to discourse, CDA seeks to link texts at a micro-level (the *textual level*) with macro-level power structures (*sociocultural practice*) which, in drawing upon discourse, such texts reproduce. In CDA, *discursive practice* is thus the mediator between the macro- and micro-levels, as shown in Figure 1.

The activities in bold on the right of the model represent the framework of analysis, in which a piece of text is described, and then the discursive practices upon which it draws are identified, and linked to the underlying power relations which may be reproduced by the interaction. In selecting pieces of text, CDA draws on Bakhtin's concept of *utterance* (Bakhtin 1981 in Holland et al. 1998, p. 173), a temporarily performed and unique configuration of context, subject positions, and meaning between interacting, *dialogical* people—although, as Goffman (1981, p. 38) has pointed out, audiences for political speeches are usually preratified and thus more favorable reactions may be expected by the speaker (this may explain the use of confidence as a speech genre, as will be seen below).

In selecting sections of a speech for analysis, the analyst therefore looks for identifiable configurations of discursive practice (references 1 through 16 in the text) consisting of discrete, unique utterances, or combinations of idioms, references, inferences or phrases within a particular order of discourse, such as development. In identifying these configurations, Fairclough (1995a) further distinguishes between generic "speech genres," or linguistic devices, that apply horizontally across various orders of discourse (which any researcher, for example, might be likely to find when performing CDA in other domains), and,

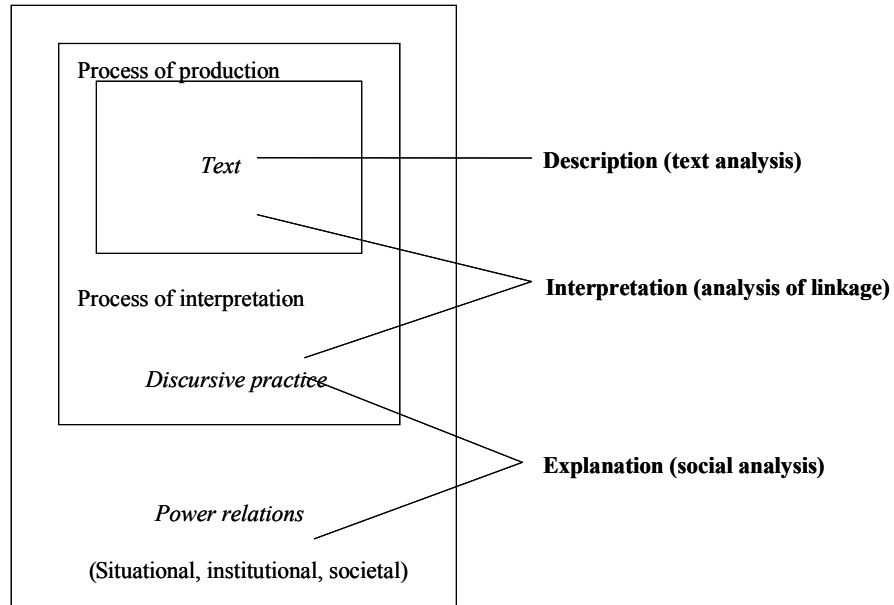


Figure 1. Dimensions of Discourse Analysis (Adapted from Titscher et al. 2000)

Speech Genre (SG)	Discursive Type (DT)
1 Confidence ^a	1 Technocracy
2 Factual information	2 Legitimacy
3 Humor	3 Neutrality
4 Persuasion	4 Corporatism
	5 Tech(nological) optimism
	6 Pragmatism
^a Please note that this term is used in the sense of “something confided” between people.	

Figure 2 Speech Genres and Discursive Types Identified in this Analysis

by contrast, “discursive types,” or themes, formations which are vertically identifiable as part a particular order of discourse and which are likely to remain specific to a particular domain of study. By way of illustration, although all of the categories listed in Figure 2 derive directly from the text, all of the speech genres are common components of everyday conversation, whilst the discursive types listed are likely to be familiar to most interpretive IS researchers. As will

be seen in the analysis, it is the mixing of (often contradictory) speech genres and discursive types that provides units of discursive practice, and hence discourse, with its unique power.

In the analysis which follows, genres and discursive types were identified from the text using a semi-grounded approach, where data was separated into first- and second-order concepts (Orlikowski 1993; Van Maanen and Barley). Thus recurrent devices and themes were first identified, then reduced upon repeated readings to the higher-level concepts shown in Figure 2. It should be acknowledged that, in common with all semi-grounded approaches involving the identification and distillation of recurrent themes, this exercise inevitably involves subjective judgements on the part of the researcher performing this activity and, as a result, there can be no definitive analysis of a piece of discourse.

However, the inevitably subjective nature of such judgements is offset to some degree by the tabular format in which the analysis of the text has been presented, which represents a departure from previous applications of CDA. In addition to reasons of clarity, the intention of this format is to place both author and reader in exactly the same position to interpret the text, thus actively supporting the development of independent judgements concerning the analysis (although it should be admitted that the author actually attended the speech). Thus a direct link can be traced from the source material (text column), through the initial identification of units of discursive analysis (ref column) and description of these (description column), to the derivation of speech genres and discursive types (interpretation column), through to the macro-level power relations which, it is proposed, are replicated or altered as a result (the explanation column). This format thus has the almost unique advantage within interpretive social enquiry of presenting the reader of a paper with a complete set of all of the analytical materials that were originally at the disposal of the author.

2.2 Analysis

The source text for the critical discourse analysis below, of which approximately 50 percent has been selected, was given by James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank Group, to an audience of both academics and nonacademics at Cambridge University on June 24, 2000. It is entitled “New Possibilities in Information Technology and Knowledge for Development in a Global Economy” and is available on the Web (<http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/extme/jdwsp062400.htm>). Readers are encouraged, if possible, to view the text in its entirety, in order to place the selections below within their proper context. The analysis of selected units of discursive practice is divided into four sections

reflecting the structure of the speech, which I have termed Introduction, Role of ICT, Initiatives, and Initiatives and Conclusion. Each section of analysis is supported by a corresponding section of commentary.

It is suggested that the reader approach the analysis of the speech section by section, first reading the text column in the table, then the short narrative commentary which follows over the page, followed by a return to the analysis columns of the table, before proceeding to the next part of the text.

2.2.1 Introduction

In their analysis of a political speech by a Spanish Secretary of the Interior legitimating the expulsion of African illegal migrants, Rojo and van Dijk argue:

The crucial element in most forms of social and political legitimation is that a powerful group or institution...seeks *normative* approval for its policies or actions....In such legitimating discourse, institutional actions and policies are typically described as beneficial for the group or society as a whole (1997, p. 528).

Whether or not this is intended by the speaker (this knowledge is, of course, not available to either author or reader), the introductory part of the speech establishes, or replicates, the legitimacy of the position of the World Bank as an (implied) leader within development, a position which will be required as a platform for the legitimation of a particular view of ICT later on. Recalling Escobar's comments earlier regarding the co-emergence in discourse of poverty and development, we can see the rapid establishment of a set of normative relations between these two key elements of developmental discourse. Hence the link column of the analysis shows the emergence of legitimacy (the appeal in Ref 4 to a higher order need for intervention), and technocracy (the assertion of expertise in Ref 1). These two discursive types can be seen as core components of the wider order of discourse underpinning, or replicating, the Bank's position in development. Rojo and van Dijk continue:

If successful, legitimation not only implies the endorsement of specific actions, but usually also extends to the dominant group or institutions themselves, as well as to their position and leadership. This means that legitimation has both a top-down and bottom-up direction (1997, p. 528).

2.2.1 Introduction

Ref	Text	Description (Text Analysis)	Interpretation (Discursive Practice)	Explanation (Social Practice)
1	So let me suggest to you that you include both of our thinking in your observations on information technology because had Esther [†] not have been here I would have stolen a speech I heard her make two weeks ago as my own. But Esther will give it to you and she indeed is one of the great experts on the subject in the world and I am glad that she is here and you should be also.	Establishment of Bank's techocratic expertise credentials for what is to follow	Technocracy (DT1) Persuasion (SG4)	Replication of Bank's dominant status as development expert
2	My vantage point on information technology is one from the World Bank... And so I am grateful to Keynes for his guidance and his participation in those negotiations because it has created a job that I am now involved in and so I want to thank you and my children want to thank you because of the very large salary I receive.	Unabashed membership of privileged group	Establishment as straight-talking, candid, and humorous: Confidence (SG1) Humor (SG3)	Open acknowledgment (and thus replication of) legitimacy of Bank's position as highly paid
3	We at the bank as you know, and let me talk from that vantage point, are concerned with the issues of poverty in the world. ...Just to give you the parameters—as a background of the challenge for information technology—the world that I deal with is a world of 4.8 billion people out of a globe of 6 billion people, and to give you some quick numbers 3 billion people live under 2 dollars a day and a billion two hundred million live under 1 dollar a day.	Aerial view of world-as-object Statistical possession and command	Establishment of "poverty in the world" as object of legitimate intervention by qualified organization: Factual information (SG2) Legitimacy (DT2)	Reassertion of developmental gaze; construction and normalization of poor as subjects (cf. Escobar in introduction)
4	The other characteristic is that within countries the issue of equity or equitable distribution of resources is getting worse. The relationship between the richest percentiles and the poorest percentiles are diverging such that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, and that dynamic is what we are seeking to address, not as a question of charity or of social conscience but of world peace.... And if you think in terms of peace, if you think in terms of equity, if you think in terms of social justice or if you think in terms of self-interest, this singular world is one where we are very dependent on what happens in the developing world.	Appeal to higher authority to legitimize Bank's mandate	Establishment of inevitable, pragmatic and nonideological basis of involvement: Factual information (SG2) Legitimacy (DT2) Persuasion (SG4) Pragmatism (DT6)	Establishes a direct link between the Bank and the problem, cutting out detractors, and replicating legitimacy of the construction, normalization, and integration of the poor within the Bank's developmental framework

[†]Esther refers to a technology expert from the Bank who gave a presentation following that of Mr. Wolfensohn.

From the above perspective, it appears that in the introductory section of the speech, the speaker has, consciously or unconsciously, legitimated and replicated certain macro-level power relations in practice. As the macro (explanation) column of the analysis shows, the Bank has first reestablished its status as expert (Ref 1); and has then reaffirmed its legitimacy to be paid highly for this (Ref 2). Interestingly, however, Ref 2 is probably the point at which the speaker is most exposed, since he is unabashedly asserting claim to be paid highly in comparison to the development's subjects—some of whom, we later learn, exist on “under 1 dollar a day.” Critical discourse analysis offers an explanation for the way in which this uncomfortable power relation is normalized in practice: the reassertion of an unpalatable (and fundamental) aspect of development is mixed with the speech genres of confidence, in which he appears to be confiding in, and thus inviting a personal, co-conspiratorial link with, his audience; and humor, in which the assertion is made in deliberately unacceptable terms, thus undermining serious objection.

By the beginning of Ref 3, the Bank appears precariously poised as a group of highly-paid experts with no object for their expertise, so the poor are quickly introduced (Ref 3) and normalized within the Bank's development paradigm, in which we first hear that ICTs are to play a major part. The two fundamental components of development discourse, the discursive types of technocracy and legitimacy, have now been established, but there remains one further important task: to place this newly established discourse (and hence newly replicated power structure) beyond the realm of questioning. In Ref 4, therefore, we hear not only that the problem is growing worse but that the Bank's intervention has a higher authority than “charity” or “social conscience” (whose underpinnings are, of course, ideological and thus open to question) but “world peace” itself. By the end of this section, the Bank is thus established as almost synonymous with development, and fundamental to the future of our world.

2.2.2 Role of ICT

Having reconstituted in the first section of his speech, the core elements of the discursive order upon which the hegemony of the World Bank rests, the speaker then builds, consciously or unconsciously, on this normative platform to outline, at a conceptual level, the Bank's underlying approach to ICT. However, before he is able to introduce this new, potentially disruptive, element into this newly established set of relations, it has to be neutralized and allocated its place within this set as an instrument of, rather than a threat to, Bank policy. Rather than attempt this directly (which would consciously highlight the potential contradiction in the minds of the audience), another, non-ICT-related, threat, Sen's *Development as Freedom*, is introduced and discussed in detail

2.2.2 Role of ICT

Ref	Text	Description	Interpretation	Explanation
5	<p>Now why do I say that in the context of talking about information technology? Because I believe that one of the great potentials that we have in terms of addressing the issue of development is the issue of the usage of digital technology and communications. Beyond the fundamental analysis of the problem, there have been many commentators and many distinguished economists in this community, the most notable of them in recent history being Amartya Sen. Not just due to the lectures that he gave actually at the World Bank based on his book <i>Development as Freedom</i>, but because also from his previous writings and thought it is made very clear that development is not just an issue of macro economics or growth but it is an issue which engages all aspects of societal development. You need to look at, in his terms, freedom, and, in my terms, the structural issues and the quality of the legal system, the justice system, governments, the strength of governments, the economics, financial supervisory systems, fighting corruption, longer term plans in terms of education, of health, of rural strategy, urban strategy, environmental strategy, and cultural strategy. All these things come together into a mix of issues which alongside growth and macroeconomic policy determine whether development will take place in an effective and equitable way.</p>	<p>ICT as instrument of development and peace</p> <p>Demonstration of awareness of literature</p> <p>Alignment of Bank's traditional, structural, top-down agenda with Sen's freedom</p>	<p>Unproblematic treatment of role of ICT in development: (DT5) Tech optimism Factual information (SG2)</p> <p>Translation of Sen's different, concept into structural categories of the Bank, thus neutralizing it: Persuasion (SG4) Technocracy (DT1) Legitimacy (DT2) Neutrality (DT1)</p>	<p>Replication of Bank's subjugation of technology as instrument of technocratic developmentalism (as opposed to its potential in cultivating counter-networks)</p> <p>Appropriation and neutralization of Sen's newly published, potential threat (with which many of the audience would have been expected to have been familiar), thus replicating status quo</p>

Ref	Text	Description	Interpretation	Explanation
6	<p>...So why then talk about information technology. Does it replace all this? Is it a short cut? Is it something that transforms the analysis? No, it does not. But what it does do is to give you a tremendous opportunity of leveraging the notion of the transfer of knowledge, of empowering people and allowing you to achieve your objectives in terms of this development paradigm in ways that were previously not possible.</p> <p>And there the issue again breaks down into two elements: the technology itself which today permits communication in many forms and, of course, the knowledge that goes with it. This is the knowledge that is shaped, that is available for transmission over this new system and here Esther herself is an expert and had she not been here I would have told you about all the charts she showed me the other day on the transmission of normal knowledge into specially characterized knowledge for this purpose but she is here so I cannot play it to your eyes quite as easily as I normally do. But she might tell you something about that.</p>	<p>ICT do not disturb the Bank's approach to development; indeed, they merely leverage it</p> <p>Expert...charts... special knowledge... available over this new system: Deepening of technocratization of problem, to which Bank possesses expertise</p>	<p>Neutralization of potential threat of ICT to Bank's position: Persuasion (SG4) Neutrality (DT3) Tech Optimism (DT5)</p> <p>Co-opting of corporate terminology: Corporatism (DT4)</p> <p>Appeal to Bank's expertise: Technocracy (DT1) Legitimacy (DT2)</p>	<p>Emphatic alignment of technology with dominant corporate terminology</p> <p>Reiteration of the role of ICT as the neutral tool of the Bank</p> <p>Coevolution of poverty and development and tightening of developmental discourse at macro-level</p>

(Ref 5), neutralized, and then linked to ICT in Ref 6 (inference: ICT are also nonthreatening) in a technique which has been referred to as *masking* (Ng and Bradac 1993).

In the preface to *Development as Freedom*, Sen pays tribute to the speaker, “whose vision, skill, and humanity I much admire” (often a preface for criticism), before stating:

The World Bank has not invariably been my favorite organization. The power to do good goes almost always with the possibility to do the opposite, and as a professional economist, I have had occasions in the past to wonder whether the Bank could not have done very much better. These reservations and criticisms are in print (1999, p. xiii).

Moreover, almost in anticipation of others’ future attempts to represent or normalize his work, Sen continues later in the same page:

...this work is presented mainly for open deliberation and critical scrutiny. I have, throughout my life, avoided giving advice to the “authorities.” Indeed, I have never counseled any government, preferring to place my suggestions and critiques ...in the public domain (1999, pp. xiii-xiv).

In the attempt to neutralize the, in many ways, alternative developmental paradigm outlined in Sen’s book, Sen is first linked to the World Bank (Ref 5) in a way that, from his above comments, he might surely have disapproved, and his ideas are represented as synonymous with Bank policy:

Not just due to the lectures that he gave actually at the World Bank based on his book *Development as Freedom* but also from his previous writings....You need to look at, in his terms, freedom, and, in my terms, the structural issues (Text, Ref 5).

By Ref 6, having attacked a less immediately relevant threat, the potential threat of ICT to the Bank’s normative position is confronted *rhetorically*, i.e., from a position of consensual, dominant discourse (first sentence). But is the Bank making appropriate use of ICT? The Bank’s expertise and mastery of ICT as a developmental tool remains to be established as a platform for later parts of the speech. In Ref 6, therefore, the speaker invokes a variety of discursive types (components of the development order of discourse) to show that this is the case. To the existing discursive types of technocracy, legitimacy, and pragmatism,

deployed in the Introduction, are added technological optimism, (the nonproblematic linking of ICT to opportunity), and corporatism (the deployment, hence ownership of elements of dominant corporate discourse, such as “leveraging,” “empowering,” “objectives,” and “knowledge”). We learn that “normal knowledge” is transmitted, mysteriously, into “specially characterized knowledge” and that, fortunately, we can rely on the World Bank for this.

2.2.3 Initiatives

Whether through unconscious habit or rhetorical mastery, by Ref 7, the speaker is now established in a strong position from which to discuss the Bank’s ICT-related initiatives. Not only has he reconstituted the essential components of developmental discourse (recalling Escobar once again) and placed this relationship beyond ideological questioning by appealing to a higher legitimacy, but he appears successfully to have neutralized two independent, potential threats by representing them as integral components of the Bank itself. Finally, he has reminded us of the Bank’s expert status in wielding one of these tamed threats, ICT, thus tightening its hegemonic control over those requiring “technologizing.” A great deal of macro-level structure has thus already been drawn on (in discursive types) and replicated in the discursive order in a fairly short micro-level textual space.

In Ref 7, there is another interesting blending: the speech genre of confidence (an appeal, person-to-person, to the self-evidence of the Internet’s potential, even to someone who “grew up without any facility for using Internet”) with the harder discursive type of *technocracy*, which accompanies the announcement of his intention to use ICT to turn his organization into a knowledge bank (the Development Gateway was under construction at the time of this speech). A dramatic expansion of the Bank’s mandate (recalling the discussion in the previous section) is thus presented unproblematically at the self-evident level of common sense. This theme is taken up again in Ref 10, where the Gateway itself is introduced at a generic level. Here, however, in contrast to the majority of the speech to date, the pronoun *we* is employed three times in the first two sentences to create an impression of consensualism using a common device:

...the way in which selectional choices made at the level of definite descriptions may manipulate the hearer’s identifications by directing attention away from designated individuals towards some generic role or conceptual category (Wilson 1990, p. 77).

2.2.3 Initiatives

Ref	Text	Description	Interpretation	Explanation
7	I thought I might just tell you, not as a matter of theory, but as a matter of practice , what we have done in the last five years since I have had the privilege of running the Bank. Coming as I did, I was someone, like many of you I suppose , who grew up without any facility for using Internet, or using a computer, but very conscious of the fact that this was an extraordinary tool . Just let me give you a cameo of the last five years in our own institution. The first thing I recognized is that it was not just money that was important in development, and so I coined the phrase that we should not just be a money bank but a knowledge bank .	Concrete achievement Irrefutability at common sense level Stakes claim to financial <i>and</i> knowledge-related power	Factual information (SG2) Pragmatism (DT6) Confidence (SG1) Tech optimism (DT5) Persuasion (SG4) Technocracy (DT1) Legitimacy (DT2)	Attempted move away from funder, practitioner, and evaluator of development, to become central repository of development best practice itself; macro-level expansion and control
8	The second thing which happened was that I went to Uganda on a trip and then came back to the United States to Wyoming where I have a small place . The local chamber of commerce had been after me to make a speech for a long time...I said “why don’t we link the Jackson Hole High School with the Uganda High School that I just saw, and we can do it by Internet and wouldn’t it be fun for the kids of Jackson Hole to know something about Uganda ”; but of course very few people in the audience knew about Uganda, I might say, and I can assure you that none of the kids in Uganda knew about Jackson Hole, Wyoming. ... These two schools were linked and that was the start of a program which we call World Links which now has 35,000 kids linked in the south and the north. Inuit kids from Canada are working with kids in Latin America; kids in France dealing with French Colonies in the continent of Africa; kids in Madrid dealing with Spanish speaking countries and so on.	“Back yard,” person-next-door approachability Invitation to equate a U.S. high school experience with that of a Ugandan school (rebadged as a high school in U.S. terms); equivalence of national level LDC school with U.S. regional school	Confidence (SG1) Equation of kids in U.S. school with kids in Uganda (kids is an affluent American social construction); hence rendering invisible huge cultural inequities: Neutrality (DT3) Legitimacy (DT2) Persuasion (SG4) Pragmatism (DT6) Tech optimism (DT5)	Elision of major contextual differences has produced a normalized view of cooperative interaction between kids of the world; inappropriate use of kids to represent the experience of many children in LDCs; subjugation of non-Western experience to Western discursive categories

Ref	Text	Description	Interpretation	Explanation
9	By the way... in Africa we use wind-up radios —radios that you wind a little crank for two minutes and then you have two hours of playing— and we were using that for teaching as well.	“We” use wind-up radios in Africa	Legitimacy (DT2)	Further elision of contextual difference to legitimize position
10	...and then we started to think a little beyond that. And we thought well now we could bring together the experience in a better way than we have done before...in terms of a global development network...which is linked by internet so that the experience and the knowledge of people in technology becomes available from the north to the south, from the south to the south, from the south to the north, etc. This is in the works.	Beginning of Global Gateway (see macro-level analysis in previous section)	Neutrality (DT3) Tech optimism (DT5)	Extensively criticized as attempt by Bank to establish hegemony over development discourse on the Net: see previous section

However, it is arguable that the most blatant example of the inappropriate use of the collective pronoun within the speech appears at Ref 9, where the speaker comments: "...in Africa, *we* use wind-up radios" (emphasis added). This comment illustrates a more important point than the simple absurdity of the President of the World Bank Group using wind-up radios in Africa: the tendency of dominant discourse to define, yet assimilate and normalize, otherness, downplaying often major differences in socio-economic and cultural experience.

If the above examples show a localized tendency to normalize, Ref 8 is an example of the use of a normalized Western cultural framework to plan and use ICT within a developmental context. Again, there is an attempt to elide major differences in experience, in which kids link up for "fun" across the world:

...Wouldn't it be fun for the kids of Jackson Hole to know something about Uganda...I can assure you that none of the kids in Uganda knew about Jackson Hole....35,000 kids linked in the south and the north...Inuit kids from Canada are working with kids in Latin America; kids in France...kids in Madrid... and so on (Ref 8).

It is arguable that the repetition of the word kids throughout the passage is an attempt at appealing to the audience via, in the view of the speaker, a universal, neutral category; however, kids remains a North American cultural construction, not a universal state that accords with the experiences of many children in LDCs, many of whom combine education with an economic role from near-infancy. Given his position, the speaker's possible unawareness of his cultural bias is possibly of greater concern than the possibility that he *was* aware, but chose to manipulate it.

2.2.4 Initiatives and Conclusion

In contrast to the evidence, presented in the Initiatives part of the speech, of the planning and deployment of ICT in LDCs within frameworks defined by Western (North American) discourse, there is evidence in Refs 11, 12, and 13 of the direct use of ICT to extend the power relations underpinning such discourse. This has already been demonstrated at the macro-level in the previous section, in the discussion of the Development Gateway; as in the analyses of previous parts of the text, the object of interest here is rather the way in which such structures are drawn upon, justified, and hence replicated at the micro-level of the text.

2.2.4 Initiatives and Conclusion

Ref	Text	Description	Interpretation	Explanation
11	We also concluded that in terms of the training of people, we should not just stop at high schools. And so we now have in Africa, in 14 sites, what we call an African Virtual University where, from teaching sites in North America, French Canada and in Ireland , we are giving degree courses in Science, Technology and Engineering taught by satellite.....So that was another initiative — all again developed in the last several years.	Top-down approach	Export of predominantly North American worldview, even (via French Canada) to Francophone Africa Neutrality (DT3)	Expansion and strengthening of dominant technocratic discourse via ICT
12	And we did not limit it to that. We thought—you know—what is one of the key functions in terms of knowledge and we came to the training of administrators. So every Saturday morning now from the Virtual University of the Monterrey Tech System we link up with 300 towns in Latin America in seven countries to teach various subjects—from how to run a fire department to how to construct a budget —and the process in those towns and villages again is synchronous or asynchronous but, most significantly, they talk to each other as a community so that a Mayor in Costa Rica might be working with a Mayor in Mexico City. This interchange—this dialogue and this coming together—is facilitated by technologyAnd when I talk then about information technology, the new millennium and the future , you should think in terms of how this tool can give you leverage to a degree that you have not had before	“we link up...to teach” “information technology, the new millennium and the future” linkage	Appeal to vision of global suburban community (mayors, fire departments, budgets): again, cultural exports: Technocracy (DT1) Neutrality (DT3) Tech optimism (DT6) Persuasion (SG4)	Association of ICT with Western civic ideals, and the future, has strengthened their linkages within the Bank’s developmental discourse
13	... Two days ago I opened, by satellite, a new system.... It went impeccably well. It began at 7 a.m. and it was supposed to conclude at 8.51, and at 8.51 we had had 15 speeches. This is something that would have been impossible in person, I might tell you. But by satellite somehow people kept to their brief time-span and we were able to put this thing together.	Use of technology to normalize interaction	ICT as way of enforcing control over interaction, to Bank agenda Neutrality (DT3)	Association of ICT with increased ability to order and control, under cooperative rubric (see end of paragraph)

Ref	Text	Description	Interpretation	Explanation
14	<p>I could go on and on. I could tell you of visits to the Ivory Coast where I was meeting with cocoa and coffee farmers, literally in the jungle with no water, no power, rough streets, and where I was made a Chief—which, since I cannot get an honorary degree from Cambridge, is the next best thing. The robes are actually I am sure more beautiful. There is gold—I should have worn it today actually. But in any event, I am sitting with my brother Chiefs and one of them—it is a brother chief not a sister chief I might tell you in most parts in Africa—said to me “do you want to see the office?” I said that yes, I would love to see the office, I went into the office and there were two young people sitting in front of two computers. One of them was there for the weighing in and the recording of the quality of the coffee and cocoa. But the other was linked to Reuters so that they could have daily prices—real-time prices—on coffee and cocoa in order to deal with the traders.</p>	<p>Orientalism (Said 1978): Inaccurate, mythical, and often neo-colonial portrayal of the other in deliberately exotic terms; softening of this in humorous, narrative terms; association of young people and ICT</p>	<p>Humor (SG3) Confidence (SG1) Neutrality (DT3) Tech optimism (DT5) Pragmatism (DT6) Persuasion (SG4)</p>	<p>Perpetuation (albeit humorous) of objectification of developmental subjects as exotic; reinforcement of perceptions of the other (i.e. non-Western)</p>
15	<p>So there they are getting the daily quotes on coffee and cocoa in this village and, through the cooperatives in the morning sending out— either by cellular telephone or, since it is a very poor community, by pagers, which is much cheaper—the price of coffee and cocoa in Chicago and in London.</p> <p>I then return to my brother chiefs to discuss what they were talking about which entailed forwards, contracts—I mean more tough minded traders you have never seen. This is all compared to 4 years ago when they were completely at the mercy of the visiting trading community that came round.</p>	<p>Continuation of narrative device</p> <p>ICT as natural and inevitable extension of international market capitalism into rural arena</p>	<p>Softening/neutralization of issues regarding inequality, etc:</p> <p>Neutrality (DT3) Confidence (SG1)</p> <p>Technocracy (DT1) Neutrality (DT1) Persuasion (SG4) Pragmatism (DT6) Tech optimism (DT5)</p>	<p>Replication of evolutionary assumptions behind use of ICT in development; implication that, given the opportunity (by the Bank), most “brother chiefs” would embrace “tough-minded trading”</p>

Ref	Text	Description	Interpretation	Explanation
16	<p>I have literally dozens of examples of the way that this is working. We are at the beginning of a revolution: we are in a revolution. And I would simply like to say to you—because I would like to have time for questions if there are any—that the use of information technology does not disturb the basic framework of the development paradigm. But it is giving us opportunities to expand it, to leverage it, and I must say we are finding new ways of development and linkages that none of us have ever considered.</p>	<p>Contradiction: a “revolution” that does not disturb the basic framework of power and discourse</p>	<p>Neutralized like this, ICT do not threaten but rather actually strengthen and vindicate the Bank’s development paradigm, by expanding and leveraging it</p> <p>ICTs are a “revolution” that, paradoxically, overturns nothing, and by which the existing (Bank) hegemony is not threatened!</p> <p>Persuasion (SG4) Neutrality (DT3) Legitimacy (DT2) Corporatism (DT4) Tech optimism (DT5)</p>	<p>Final, emphatic reiteration about the alignment of ICT with the interests of the Bank, and a prediction that ICT will strengthen the Bank’s macro-structural approach</p>

Thus in Ref 11 we can see ICT as a medium for transferring Western knowledge *out* (my term) to Africa, “from teaching sites in North America, French Canada and in Ireland”—the inclusion of French Canada presumably in order to penetrate francophone Africa, an area otherwise less permeable to Western cultural transfer due to its general non-use of English. In Ref 12, the assumed neutrality (an important discursive type, or component, of developmental discourse) of such programs is demonstrated once again, where we are told that the “Virtual University of the Monterrey Tech System” is teaching “300 towns in Latin America in seven countries...various subjects— from how to run a fire department to how to construct a budget...a Mayor in Costa Rica might be working with a Mayor in Mexico City” (Ref 12). However, this one-way flow of Western (sub)urban civic values and technical structure to the LDC context is not acknowledged; in fact, the actual phraseology used was “we link up...to teach.” The separation of, and weakening of the association between, the subject and verb in this sentence is another masking device, where

The cumulative effect of the transformations is that the direct commander-commanded relationship has been changed into a relationship wherein the commander plays the role of an information giver and the commanded is assigned the role of an information receiver (Ng and Bradac 1993, p. 163).

Such depoliticization of a problematic use of technology within development is also visible in Ref 13, where the ability of ICT-mediated satellite communication to normalize and control the speaking time of interactants around the world is presented unequivocally as a benefit for all.

Perhaps the most incongruous part of the speech, however, is Refs 14 and 15, where the speaker relates how he was “literally in the jungle with no water, no power, rough streets, and where I was made a Chief...there is gold...I am sitting with my brother Chiefs and one of them—it is a brother chief not a sister chief I might tell you in most parts of Africa”(Ref 14). As discussed in Ref 2, the other markedly incongruous part of the speech, the speaker uses the speech genres of humor and confidence to overcome what is, in this case, a piece of blatant Orientalism:

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it, by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (Said 1978, p. 3).

Although softened with the speech genres of humor and confidence, the other—in this case, the Orient—is being recreated in the present with every word of the text. Moreover, in the phrase “forwards, contracts—I mean more tough-minded traders you have never seen,” it is implied that such “brother chiefs” are (presumably, contrary to indications otherwise) natural, tough-minded traders just waiting to embrace the (natural) extension of international market capitalism into the “jungle” via ICT.

By Ref 16, the Bank’s unproblematic approach to planning, deployment, and use of ICT within its own developmental paradigm has been replicated and normalized in front of our eyes. It remains only for the speaker to pull a final discursive conjuring trick:

We are at the beginning of a revolution: we are in a revolution.
And I would simply like to say to you...that the use of information technology does not disturb the basic framework of the development paradigm (Ref 16).

A similar appropriation and use of discursive terms associated with a perceived threat has been noted by Chilton (1998), whose discourse analysis of the protracted confrontation between the government of Margaret Thatcher in the UK and the anti-nuclear peace movement of the 1980s highlights her statement that “we [the government] are the true peace movement” (*Daily Telegraph* April 29, 1983), and the invention of the phrase *peacemongers* to refer to CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) protesters. However, the speaker’s own doublespeak in Ref 16, about a revolution which does not alter the basic framework of power, is followed by an almost sinister continuation, which summarizes in a phrase the deep and growing linkages between ICT, development discourse, and relations of power. The remark may not bode well for those who do not support their own objectification by the Bank as developing:

But it [information technology] is giving us opportunities to expand it [the development paradigm], to leverage it, and I must say we are finding new ways of development...that none of us have ever considered (Ref 16).

3 CONCLUSION

This paper has identified some of the major components of the World Bank’s discourse surrounding ICT and development, and shown how the manner of their deployment in speech amounts to the creation and systematization of a

set of discursive relations that support and extend a markedly North American worldview. These relations are a fusion of traditional developmental discourse—technocratic expertise (DT1), combined with poverty as an undisputable need for such expertise (DT2)—with more ICT-specific components, such as the assumption of ICT as a neutral force in development (DT3), the display of expertise in the corporate terms with which ICT is often surrounded and discussed (DT4), technological optimism bordering on determinism (DT5), and a show of ICT pragmatic use on the ground, thus ensuring results (DT6). CDA is, of course, unable to make pronouncements about the degree to which social actors are *aware* of their actions in replicating macro-structures at the micro-level. To claim that the speech analyzed here was a set of conscious, cumulative constructions on the part of the speaker would be to impute almost impossibly Machiavellian aims (and abilities) to a person who, it is likely, undertakes his job in good faith, unaware, for the most part, of the assumptions and positionality with which speeches such as this appear, upon closer analysis, to be drenched. As observers and interpreters of social life, matters regarding others' discursive intentionality are not empirically available to us, although the resulting discourse itself, recalling Escobar at the beginning of this paper, is more visible: the (re)establishment of a set of normative relations among a set of elements, institutions, and practices, and their systematization to form a whole.

Indeed, it is this very task—uncovering, problematizing, and raising our consciousness about contestable assumptions which have, through sheer use, become woven into the fabric of discursive interaction—at which CDA arguably excels. The submerged nature of many such assumptions merely makes such a task the more pressing. That it is an important task is evidenced by the analysis itself: the links posited between discursive forms at the micro-level and the replication, or alteration, of discursive power relations at the macro-level that appear in the tables of the analysis in this paper. These links are able to show how local-level utterances are in fact saturated with prior assumptions about role, legitimacy, and the nature of the world—in short, about power—and how the inequalities attendant upon such assumptions can be reproduced, wittingly or unwittingly, in discursive practice.

This paper has shown how the appropriation and discursive deployment of ICT, with its association with progress and rationality, offers a powerful opportunity to further the interests of technocratic, often mainstream stakeholders, acting as a magnifier for dominant discursive interests by creating new subjects for objectification. The ability of CDA to expose this effect, identify the various elements of such discourse in practice, and show how their interaction is systematized into a “technology of representation” (Foucault 1975, p. 104), thus renders it a useful tool for IS researchers; in particular, those wishing to understand the potent interaction of ICT with developmental and other

discursive gazes that look out upon contested organizational landscapes. Thus CDA might prove an appropriate framework for the analysis of discourse within the more mainstream IS study domains of, say, IS strategy, IS procurement, compilation of requirements catalogues, discussions about hardware relocation, budget allocation, process redesign, iterative prototyping, program review boards—anywhere at all, in fact, where the prevailing discourse masks submerged assumptions and interests regarding the nature and role of ICT.

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About the Author

Mark Thompson recently completed a Ph.D. (2002) at the Judge Institute of Management, Cambridge University, examining the impact of sociological theories of practice, or emergent ontologies, for conceptions of the role of the self in IS and organizational studies and its implications for future research within both genres. His primary fieldwork involved action research with health information systems in townships in Cape Town, South Africa (*Information and Organization* (12:3), 2002, pp. 183-211). Mark is currently a director of Methods Application Ltd, a London-based IS consultancy specializing in the management of major organizational IS change programs. Mark can be reached by e-mail at mpat2@cam.ac.uk.

